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Sir
Philip
Sidney
"a
veray
parfit gen
knight

Written by Anna M. Stoddart
Illustrated by Margaret L. Huggins

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OF CAMBRIDGE

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

“ Ay, not yet may the land forget that bore and loved thee and praised
and wept,
Sidney, lord of the stainless sword, the name of names that her heart's
love kept
Fast as thine did her own, a sign to light thy life till it sank and
slept.”

—ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.



Sir Philip Sidney.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

SERVANT OF GOD

BY

ANNA M. STODDART

ILLUSTRATED BY MARGARET L. HUGGINS

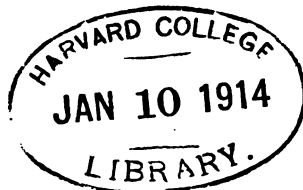


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Hall fund

TO

H. E. P.,

OUR FRIEND;

OUR HELP IN THE "MORE EXCELLENT WAY"

OF THE WILL OF GOD;

We dedicate

THIS SHORT ACCOUNT OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

✓ PORTRAIT OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
✓ PENSURST PLACE	<i>Page 12</i>
✓ THE TERRACE, PENSURST PLACE	32
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P R E F A C E.

IN offering the story of Sir Philip Sidney's life to the public, the writer wishes to acknowledge her great indebtedness to the researches made by Mr Fox Bourne, and to the fine scholarship of the late Mr Addington Symonds, and to explain that her object is in no way to compete with the worthier biographies written by these gentlemen. She desires only to present the man as he appears in a simple sequence of the episodes of his life, and to avoid as much as pos-

sible the historical and literary digressions, which, although essential to the more important works, are apt to divert the attention from their central figure. Her book is meant rather for the general reader than for the student ; and if boys and girls in Sidney's England will learn from its pages that obedience to the will of God alone can mould a life into immortal example, she will reap a rich reward.



SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.



O shines a good deed in a naughty world," wrote Shakspeare some ten years after Sidney's death, perhaps with a thought consecrated to the hero of Zutphen, whose self-denial in presence of another's need

dazzled the imagination of his time. We do not know the measure of that influence, what worth it had to purify

the crafty and self-seeking men who bared their heads in homage when they buried "the jewel of the realm,"—but we *do* know that it helped to make plain the purer law, and to add an imperishable precedent to the standard of noble living. Through three centuries "the little candle" has thrown its beams. Philip Sidney, nurtured in the traditions of feudal chivalry, his mind quick with the impulse of Christian chivalry, remains to us an exquisite type of the transition. His peers were bounded by imposing forms which prescribed their aims,—he, obedient to these so far as they were "honest in the sight of all men," acknowledged them as but externals, and knew the ultimate voice to which his attentive spirit bowed. Few could hear it in those noisy times, when crooked diplomacy, the clash of arms, and cruelty were the outward and visible signs of what men called religion.

It is worth our while to study the records of such a man, although of these but a handful of faded pages is left to us. Dim where we would have them clear, illuminated with fancies where we would have them ungilded story, void where we would have them full, these pages tell us none the less of a life rare at any

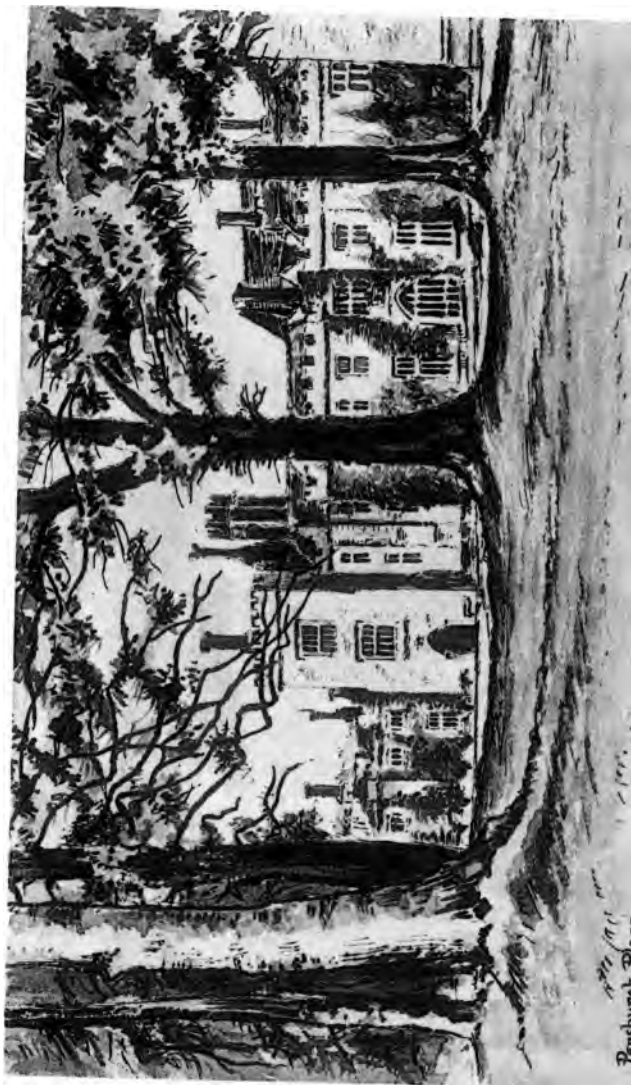
time, exquisite at the time of its occurrence. From their halting tale, from all that scholars have selected during years of research and of collation, we can fit into contour the figure of Sir Philip Sidney, and make him stand in high relief against the troubled background of his times, not flatten into scant significance upon its level.

A short walk takes us from Penshurst Station to his home, scarcely changed since he and Spenser rode down from Court to note how the Gateway Tower rose. The road invites us to loiter. Spanish chestnuts border it; behind them are laurels; beyond the bays is a further backing of tall larches. The banks climb to fences and are full of wild flowers,—summer growths this summer morning,—St John's wort, agrimony, dark-blue veronica, swelling stalks of angelica.

We reach the village and pass through the lych-gate into the churchyard. Philip Sidney must have gone in and out full often under the beam on which is carved: "My flesh also shall rest in hope." The gate was there a century before his birth. The old guild-house rises beside it: they have joint memories, for they have

weathered four centuries and a half together, and they stretch out their beams to each other and have reasoned themselves into one mind upon a world to which they scarcely belong. They were in their prime when Philip and his little sisters pattered by them and up the path to church. Now they are very old, and though we touch them and see them, we know that they are memories and not realities. Memories made tangible and visible linger here to keep immortal Philip's fame, to enshrine the echoes of his footsteps, to preserve the very look of things on which his young eyes rested. They have a trust to keep so precious that it cannot be bequeathed. Frail warders, whose antique loyalty outlives the braggart centuries and has no part in them, how strong is love that has embalmed your sacred charge!

From the churchyard we pass into the park and enter the President's court. It took its name from Philip's father, Lord President of the Welsh Marches, and it stretches between the west front of Penshurst Place and a dwarf stone wall which encloses it from the park. The President raised most of this low, embattled wing when he enlarged the house and built the gateway tower.



1874 1875
Pendurak Place.

The tower opens to the north front and bears its pedigree above the door. Pencester the place was called when Edward VI. gave it to Sir William Sidney, the President's father. The President himself was Edward's playmate in childhood, his schoolmate in boyhood, his comfort in his brief kingship; in his ear he breathed his last wish for England, and in his arms he died. A few months before Edward died, he made this gift to the Sidneys; a year later Sir William Sidney died, and the boy-king's friend was lord of Penshurst. It had passed through many hands, knightly and royal; had belonged to de Pencesters and Pulteneys, and to two sons of Henry IV.; had then reverted to the crown, and had been granted by Henry VI. to the Dukes of Buckingham, the last of whom, the "mirror of all courtesy," was Wolsey's victim. Again Penshurst became crown property, and Henry VIII. enlarged its park. It was granted to a brave soldier, Sir Ralph Fane, who rallied the English cavalry at Pinkie, and retrieved the fortunes of the day; but he too forfeited the gift when the Duke of Somerset forfeited his life, and Edward handed over the land and manor-house to the faithful Sidneys.

The north front gives us the full length of the building, mainly two-storeyed, simple and stately, towered at either end, and in the middle the frontage between is plain, embattled, with perpendicular windows, here and there enriched with tracery and armorial bearings. A recess on either side the gateway tower breaks the line, and the wing to its left is shrouded in ivy. We pass through the door into the tower, from whose vaulted roof the porcupine looks down. Reaching the inner court, we look back upon a row of five shields, Sir Henry Sidney's and those of his four children who survived their youth. Sir Philip's is the central shield, one-half of it filled with the Walsingham quarterings. Sir Henry's bears the Dudley arms impaled on his. He had married Lady Mary Dudley two years before King Edward died. She was a slip of a girl, only sixteen, and very lovely. Her father and her brother, Lord Guildford Dudley, lost their heads in the mad attempt to save England from a Papist reaction; her other brothers kept their heads, but lost their liberty for a time. Sir Henry Sidney, not altogether guiltless in the matter, condoned his share by paying prompt homage

to Mary Tudor, who had discernment enough to acknowledge the over-mastering influence of the Dudleys upon all within their family, and to recognise the worth of the penitent. But he was left for some months to rusticate here, till Mary—having need of his wisdom and of that touch of craft which those perilous times begat in the honestest—sent for him early in 1554, and made him one of the Earl of Bedford's embassy to Spain. They fetched her grim wooer, Prince Philip, to marry her in July that same year, and so well pleased was Mary with Sir Henry's part in these proceedings, that she reinstated him in all his former courtly functions, and even released the three Dudleys from the Tower, because they were brothers to his wife.

And thus it came about that when Philip Sidney was christened in December, the Spanish Prince was his godfather,—in company with the Earl of Bedford,—doing barren honour to the Queen's ambassadors, who had brought him on a bootless errand. But the fact of Prince Philip's share in the ceremony remains to us, a bit of quaint irony woven into the web of time, for in all England he could have bestowed his name on no

nature less akin. The baby, who lay in his arms a moment, and perhaps smiled in the gloomy sponsor's face, got no contagion of fanaticism, of superstition, of cruelty from the touch; for Sidney grew up to be in faith, in character, in insight, in political association, in council and in camp, his lifelong opponent.

The four years which followed, and which filled England with terror, passed lightly over little Philip's sunny head. He spent them here, his mother with him, Ambrosia by-and-by taking his place in her arms, while he ran at her side. Another baby came and went before Ambrosia, but he could hardly remember that brief life. His father went to Ireland as Lord Deputy, when Philip was three years old—a troublesome post to which Sir Henry was called and recalled during quarter of a century.

A year later Queen Mary died, and Princess Elizabeth came to the throne. Then the children had to do without their fair young mother for months at a time. She was wanted at the new Court, where her two brothers were first favourites, and were soon to be known as Earl of Leicester and Earl of Warwick,—

handsome men both of them, the one crafty, the other of nobler quality. Elizabeth confirmed Sir Henry's post in Ireland, where he stayed till 1560, when his boy was six years old. Then he was made Lord President of the Marches, and went to Ludlow Castle, taking his wife with him and the three children, Mary now the baby.

When he returned to Ireland the children were sent home and Lady Mary went to Court. There, in 1562, she nursed the Queen, whose beauty was blighted by the small-pox, and caught the virulent disease to her own detriment, for, from being clear-skinned and lovely, she became disfigured for the rest of her life. When Sir Henry came home that year he found her scarred beyond belief, and so ashamed of the change that she could not bear to be seen, and kept away from Court and from all places where men could note how dull and distorted was her once delicate face. For a time she stayed quietly at Penshurst, and taught Philip and Ambrosia to love their home and to reverence their loyal father. No words could tell Sir Henry's worth better than did his tenderness to the wife whom he

found so altered. After this she was nearly always with him in Ireland, at Ludlow, at Penshurst.

Parson William Darknoll had the living of Penshurst, and read the service in its church. Philip must have gone to hear him often, and his father would lead him into the chapel to the right of the altar, where Sir William Sidney was buried, and would tell him about the gallant soldier who led a wing of the English army to victory at Flodden, and whom suspicious King Hal had trusted with the care of his only son. And beneath him lay the quaint effigy of a de Pencester, perhaps less worn and blunted than now; and Philip would learn how the old mansion-house had passed through his heiress to Sir John de Pulteney, to whom Edward III. gave leave to embattle its walls. And he would know all the vicissitudes of Penshurst up to the day when his grandfather journeyed from Cranleigh in Surrey and set foot within the great hall, which Sir John de Pulteney built nearly two centuries before. We like to think of the child, sedate beyond his years, pacing the terraces and up and down the garden walks, beside the

walls of yew which shut them in, smelling the sweet
marjoram and thyme,

—“the garden flowers
Fresh as the ayre and new as are the hours ;”—

plucking “the blushing apricot and woolly peach” for
his sisters and himself.

And in the April sunshine we can fancy him pushing
through the thickets to gather primroses and lady-
smocks, starry stitchworts and celandines, blue-bells
and robin-run-the-hedge. For the Kent meadows and
ditches were a garden then as now, and violets and
mock strawberries must have clustered amongst the
arum leaves and burdocks just as they cluster now.
We can imagine the dreamy boy’s delight in his home
and its treasures,—in the shields upon its walls, in the
stout halberts and partisans and ungainly helmets which
hung around the raftered hall; in the tales which vet-
eran retainers told him of King Henry and his wars,
in grim romances of the royal courtships, in the piteous
story of Anne Boleyn, whose home had been at Hever,

but five miles or so away, and whose daughter was the royal lady that his father served.

He grew to boyhood amongst courtly men and women, amongst traditions of stately houses and noble deeds, of gallant courage and wise counsel, of pomp and circumstance. But in his parents, true, honourable, and God - fearing, he caught glimpses of a life rarer, more perfect, and more sustaining than that of courts and courtiers, and from his childhood a still and gentle wisdom was his heritage.

From time to time the whole family lived at Ludlow Castle, and when Philip was about ten years old two events of some importance to his life occurred there. His father was on the eve of another term of office in Ireland, where Lord Sussex, the interim Deputy, had managed to undo much of his work, and had brought matters to a pass of disorder and misgovernment. Elizabeth sent Sir Henry Sidney to subdue the rebellious, with which the unhappy country seethed. His work was hindered not only by the follies of his predecessor, but by the jealousy of the nobles of the Pale, who resented an administration which brought them as

well as the Irish under law and taxation. They calumniated him at Court, and influenced the parsimonious Queen to stint his supplies, so that his term of office, which lasted two years, was one of almost intolerable difficulty.

Before it began, he had made arrangements for Philip's schooling, and since the Queen allowed him to disburse his private emoluments in her service, it was necessary to find supplies which should pay the boy's keep and tuition. The Queen was very willing to let her servants pick up such crumbs as came in their way, provided that they sent in no claims upon her finances. She winked at bribery, and preferred corruption to drafts upon the treasury. But Sir Henry Sidney "sold no justice," and paid large sums out of his own pocket both for Ireland and Wales. A source existed from which modest tribute could be impounded now and then, and officials high and low had learned through several reigns to avail themselves of its occasions. In 1564 the rector of Whitford parish, in Flintshire, died. The living was worth about £100 a-year—a handsome stipend, equal to £700 or £800 of our money. It fell to the disposal of the President of the

Marches, who promptly installed little Philip as rector of Whitford, entitled to draw some two-thirds of its income, while a clergyman, contented with the remaining third, was found to fulfil its duties.

The school fees being secured, Philip was sent to Shrewsbury school, which Edward VI. had granted to the burgesses eleven years before. The head-master was Thomas Ashton, renowned in his time both for learning and for character, and Sir Henry Sidney, who knew him well, could go to Ireland fully satisfied that he left his son in good hands. Here Philip stayed for four years, and here he made a friend dear as a brother, who was not only a valued comrade through life, but his biographer after death. This was Fulke Greville, in later life Lord Brooke; and the presence of both boys at Shrewsbury school testifies to the high estimation in which it was held by the gentlemen of the neighbourhood as well as by the townspeople. Shrewsbury was full of interest for open-minded boys. Its guilds were celebrated throughout England. Their gatherings and banquets were public holidays, and we may fancy the two boys crossing the river Severn to Kingsland on Show Monday to watch the

grand procession in which all the guilds took part, when each pageant had for central figure a king, or queen, or saint, or pagan deity. The tailors adopted Queen Elizabeth, whose representative rode in company with Adam and Eve, and the bricklayers and carpenters set her royal father in the forefront of their show. There was much mixed learning to be gleaned from the spectacle, and a rare experience of the humours of the people. Then there was the castle to visit, which Edward I. had built upon the site of one much older; and there were St Mary's, and St Giles', and the Abbey Church, all showing signs of wreckage here and there, but patched up to serve for the new order and the simpler worship. And there must have been pleasant times in spring in the meadows by the river, when the boys could watch the fishermen net the silver salmon.

They were kept to their books by Thomas Ashton, so that when Philip was twelve years old he could write home both in Latin and in French. One day a letter from his father reached the boy, with a tender postscript from Lady Mary. The Lord Deputy had returned to England and had joined his wife at Penshurst. Lady

Mary's health broke down amongst the anxieties, terrors, and economies of official life in Ireland. It was a cruel post for a wife to witness the daily danger, the constant toil, the neglect and ingratitude to which her husband was subjected, and she pined for the tranquillity of home. Sir Henry sent her back some months before his task was ended. When he came home he had to pay a short visit of inspection to Ludlow Castle, and then, no doubt, he saw his boy and learned his prowess from Master Ashton.

The letter seems to have been written at Penshurst, whither Philip had despatched his essays in Latin and French. It is still preserved there, and is a model letter for all time, which all boys—and girls too—should read and mark and learn.

“I will not that my first letter be emptie of some advyses,” wrote Sir Henry, and proceeded to draw up a schedule of such canons of conduct as befitted a Christian Sidney.

The “lyfting up” of the mind to Almighty God, with prayer and thinking of Him, at an hour fixed and consecrated; the careful study of tasks appointed; obedience to the master, courtesy to all, with due discernment of

degree; temperance, activity, cleanliness; cheerfulness tempered by consideration for others; talk pure from oath and coarseness; truthfulness even in trifles; industry; the habit of doing what is right; all that can frame the ornament of a "vertuous lyf,"—these are the topics of this rare letter. We may hope that Master Ashton read it aloud to all—noble and simple—who sat on the benches of his school, and that other young hearts besides Philip's received the good seed. We can be certain that Fulke Greville conned the letter, and learned too "in his tender age" a rule of worthy living. Perhaps Philip treasured his mother's postscript as too sacred for even Greville's eyes, and pondered in his own heart her humble endorsement of his "wise father's" counsels. They sank into the gentle seriousness which formed the note of his nature even then; not one of them was thrown away, but developed with his years and bore fruit unto life eternal. Spiritually, mentally, physically, Philip expanded into that "very essence of congruity" which "drew the men of his own time to love him."

Already his worth was known to his parents. Greville heard Sir Henry speak of him one holiday which he

was spending with his friend at Ludlow Castle. Unseen in a corner of the room, his ears were witness to the father's pride and joy. "The light of my family," he called his "litell Philippe." Philip was then about thirteen years old, and had nearly come to the end of his stay at Shrewsbury school.

That year Sir Henry went back to Ireland. He had found Elizabeth prejudiced against him by the Earl of Ormond, who knew how to use his good looks and flattering tongue against the just Deputy, who levied taxes upon him as upon the poor; and Sir Henry had accentuated her misliking by presenting a bill for £3000, spent from his own purse in Ireland. Good looks were more than argument to the vanity which swayed the Queen's caprices; but below this too frequent motive-power there was a groundwork of solid judgment, which asserted itself in extremities, and which indicated her real value of those whom she employed. So in this case, in spite of disfavour and even of anger, she sent the Deputy back to his vexatious province, and apparently Lady Mary Sidney went with him.

Her brother, the Earl of Leicester, was Philip's guar-

dian in their absence. At this time he was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and made arrangements for his nephew to study there, entering him in 1568 at Christ Church College. We know very little about his life in Oxford. His tutor was a Dr Cooper, and we learn from a letter written by Leicester to Archbishop Parker that, as Philip was not very strong in the spring of 1569, his uncle wished to secure for him and Cooper a dispensation from Lent fasting. Fulke Greville was at the university, but in a different college, and Philip found time to make and cement fresh friendships, notably with Edmund Dyer, his close associate in after years, and somewhat less particularly with William Camden and Hakluyt, the latter of whom became the chronicler of contemporary voyagers and adventurers.

Another friend of more imposing quality was Sir William Cecil, soon to become the prototype of judicial dignity. At this time he was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, and was occasionally in residence there. We know that Philip spent part of his vacations with the Cecils, and it is very probable that he visited Cambridge under the Chancellor's auspices, and made

acquaintance with its "learned sort." When Sir Henry came from Ireland in 1570 and took Philip to Ludlow Castle for a three weeks' holiday, Sir William Cecil almost grudged the boy to his own father, so well had he grown to appreciate his candid mind, with its reverence and susceptibility to all wisdom.

Already older men—grave and experienced—found in his companionship what Camden calls "a lovely joy." Philip had a girl-friend, too, in the Chancellor's house, Anne Cecil, and the two fathers exchanged some letters on the weighty topic of their possible marriage; but the young people were not consulted, and were then hardly old enough for sentiment. Cecil, too, was worldly wise, and damped Sir Henry's hopes, for the Sidneys were of too sterling honour to win wealth in those precarious days, when men seized their opportunities without close scrutiny of their claims. He preferred a suitor of the latter sort, and married Anne to the Earl of Oxford, whose baseness was well gilded.

We find that Philip's academic course ended in 1571, and that he went to Ludlow Castle to spend the immediate winter with his parents.

In the spring of 1572 Catherine de Medicis inspired the Court of France with a guileful aggressive policy against Protestantism. Covering her hand with specious show of amity, she seemed to invite all Europe to be witness to her sincerity. Amongst the items of her programme was a purpose of marriage between Elizabeth and her youngest son, the Duke of Alençon. The intending bridegroom was a boy not half so old as the English Queen—a creature puny physically, and contemptible morally, given to alternations of hysterical bigotry and unbridled debauchery. Further to adorn this unwinsome wooer, she dowered him with pretensions to the championship of the Protestant faith against Spain.

We hardly know whether Elizabeth saw through the unholy lure or not. Perhaps she matched her powers against Queen Catherine's, and with that far-reaching sagacity which metted her at crises, made moves enough to occupy her antagonist, without yielding a space upon the board. At all events, the stately pace of sixteenth-century diplomacy, with its lengthy courtesies and wire-drawn negotiations, gave the Queen leisure for such a game.

The matter being broached by France, an embassy was prepared in England with Elizabeth's admiral, the Earl of Lincoln, at its head, and this crossed the Channel about the end of May. The Sidneys were concerned that Philip should make the grand tour proper for a gentleman of parts, whose future would depend on his accomplishments. The Earl of Leicester, who liked his nephew well, endorsed their plans, and helped them forward. Lincoln agreed to give him convoy as far as Paris, and the Queen granted him a passport for two years' travel on the Continent. He was fitted out as became his opportunities, and had his train of three servants, with horses for all four. The Earl of Lincoln was his sponsor at the Court of France, and Charles honoured the introduction by granting him some such decorative function as gave him daily entry. A title went with the service, and Philip became in the mouths of the liveried Monsieur le Baron de Sidenay.

An introduction of more solid worth had been supplied by Leicester. This was to Francis Walsingham, the representative of England at the French Court, in whose house Philip found a place to which he could resort for

the comfort of experienced guidance and free utterance. A watch had been set upon his lips from childhood, by no authority from without, but at the bidding of an inborn sense, and this discretion acted without the obvious reserve which men acquire, and whose bolts and hinges creak in the using. Silence became his gentle presence and veiled his youth with modesty. But to Walsingham, a man as honest as his father and full of wisdom, he could unlock the store of impressions which the glittering Court made on him, and speak out his thoughts as they arose.

Walsingham admitted him to the core of his experience, smitten as all good men were with the quality of that pure intelligence; and Sidney learned much from him that he cared to remember. He made acquaintance with a little girl in the ambassador's home, and doubtless won her childish confidence with sunny smiles and playful words. This was the Frances Walsingham whom eleven years afterwards he sought in marriage. But no portent of that future disturbed his mind, which was absorbed with its new outlook into a magnetic world.

*

Leicester's rough estimate of him as "young and rawe," was worthy of the shallow courtier incapable of recognising the finer texture of his manhood. Young he was, with that inexhaustible youth which is the sign visible of inspiration, and which laughs in the eye of age as in the dimples of infancy, but he was no more raw than are the airs of a summer dawn. Already he pondered all things in his heart, and his words won willing ears.

Three months were nearly gone, and he had shared in many a pastime of the Court, and had seen its mood in holiday dress and hospitable mien, for Catherine smiled upon the youth, whose uncle carried all before him with the English Queen. Her policy would be best served by winning his good word when he wrote to Leicester.

Paris was crowded with guests for her daughter's wedding. She had achieved a dazzling master-stroke. Protestant Henry of Navarre was to marry Catholic Margaret. The game was in her hands. Henry had weak places in his Protestantism; he could be won, coaxed, or perhaps terrified into the Church. The



world was at gaze at the spectacle of concord, and Protestantism crept out into the daylight, left its defences and doffed its armour to drink draughts of the Circean cup. The melancholy marriage took place with mocking show and ceremony, and five days later its consummation was announced when the midnight tocsin rang and the gutters surged with Protestant blood. The sleek hell-cat had ceased to purr, and had sprung upon her sleeping prey.

Philip Sidney was at the English embassy, safe for the moment, but from its sanctuary he saw and heard what he could never forget. That day-dawn found the boy a man, with a starting-point for his maturity always conspicuous in his memory. France was accursed soil, Spain was the enemy of God, Popery was the ritual of darkness. They were all three the linked foes of righteousness, and he pledged his life to their defeat.

As soon as it was possible he left Paris, accompanied by other refugees, English like himself. He went with them to Lorraine, where they halted, and where he wintered, studying French history and mastering the niceties of the language—a passport at other Courts.

In March he set out again, riding with his attendants to Strasburg and by stages up the Rhine to Frankfort. Hither some of the acquaintances met in Paris had fled, and here he found hospitable entertainment in the house of a wealthy and large-minded burgess, the printer Wechel. This man kept open house in princely fashion for men of note and learning. When Philip joined the circle, he found that a French Protestant was for the time its most illustrious member. His name was Hubert Languet, and he had made good his escape from murderous Paris, whither he had been attracted to note for himself the sincerity of Catherine's overtures of peace. He was a scholar, a fine linguist, a politician of rare knowledge, diplomatic in insight and address, learned in Civil Law, of which he had been Professor at the University of Padua, and withal a man of ardent character, devoutly religious, with a spiritual development most uncommon at that troubled time. He was the friend of all the best Protestant princes in Germany, and carried a personal weight, which gave him access to many Courts.

Perhaps no other man in Europe could have better

met Philip's need of large instruction, his preparedness for definite direction. For Languet was possessed with the sense that Spain and France were the enemies of religion, that Rome was their lever, and that if Protestantism remained passive in presence of this co-operation, it would be at the sacrifice of all that the Reformation had achieved. Philip arrived with his soul on fire for the same cause, and Languet submitted at once to his "magic spell."

The attraction was mutual, the younger man recognising how great a treasure of knowledge, insight, and statecraft was at his disposal with the confidence of the older. We can imagine the rapid stages of their friendship, from formal introduction to mutual recognition, and then to eager and constant intercourse ripening to friendship. We can imagine the response that flashed from kindred soul to soul, when each apprehended of the other that he lived in the light of God. That much of their conversation turned upon that life we know, for Philip reverted to these days long after, when he was busy with the *Arcadia*, and recorded in one of its eclogues how "old Languet, with sweet skill, drew his youth to have a feeling taste of God."

In early summer there was need to make a further move. One year of his term was over, and had brought him gain in many ways. He had made acquaintance with France at a time acute with trial, pregnant with deplorable issue,—for the victory of its vile Court sowed the dragon's teeth of three dread centuries. He had acquired its language, had glanced at its ceremonial, had caught the grace of its pliant polish. In Germany he had learned the attitude of German princes, the phlegm which dulled their Protestantism, the foolish rancours of sectarianism. He had met a vivid spirit akin to his own, mellowed with wisdom, loyal to its aim, conclusive as to its methods. He had been kindled by its determination, and was aglow with its clear purpose.

The union of Protestant Europe against its Catholic Federation was no dream to the friends, but an end to be achieved. They held council over the difficulties of their scheme. Lutheran Germany was tired of the conflict; Calvinist Germany was frittered into factions. Elizabeth there was, whose throne was literally set upon Protestantism, and she had lent an ear to a Catholic prince, when he came to woo. That was happily

at an end, they believed, for England had gone into mourning for the murdered Huguenots. But who could predict the doings of a Queen, in whom the woman was so apt to play the sovereign false? The Netherlands were true, and could England be drawn into league with them, and Germany be roused from torpor and from bickerings, and Austria be confirmed in her enlightened moderation,—perhaps won in the end to alienation from Spain,—there would be hope for faith and freedom. And so they planned a Protestant alliance, and reconnoitred every approach to its realisation.

Some time in May they journeyed both to Vienna, and Philip bent his knee to Maximilian, the wise Emperor on whom Languet counted. The Court and capital opened new vistas of enlightenment to him, and the older man felt sore at times when the younger flung himself with eagerness into quests where he could not attend him. Such was a tour in Hungary which Philip made, taking no leave of Languet, who would have frowned upon the venture. It taught him much, and after several weeks he returned to Vienna, and spent

a month with his friend before taking the road to Italy. Languet would fain have had him eschew the south, fearing, in his fatherly affection, a hundred snares in its temptations and dangers. But Italy was the goal of Sidney's wanderings, and its language and culture were the coping to all instruction at that time. To return to England maimed of these would have been to thwart the object of his father, who knew their value at the Court. Unwillingly poor Languet let him go, having succeeded only in coaxing him to avoid Rome, where his imagination pictured Sidney beset with wiles to change his faith, and marked for the dagger or the bowl if steadfast.

A young gentleman called Coningsby added his company and train to Sidney's, and the ride over the Alps began. We know that they enjoyed it, and that Philip gave way to the stimulating influences of its adventures. We learn from one of his attendants, who seems to have held the post of secretary, that he was the life of the party, "still with the muses sporting." A little explosion of temper against Coningsby vexed their harmony one day. Ruffled by the loss of money, Sidney

accused his fellow-traveller of making away with it, but when he found that their dishonest landlord had been twice paid, his penitence would make amends. Three or four times in his life a flash of impatient anger broke his wonted serenity, but only twice was it barbed with suspicion, and poor Coningsby came in the way of the first. Their route was over the passes and by the defiles of the eastern Alps, and must have been wild and dangerous enough.

But Venice was safely reached at last, and there Sidney found a residence. Venice was the meeting-place of the civilised world. Here, if anywhere, was that wide culture which men call cosmopolitan. It was the one spot in Europe where the east rubbed shoulders with the west, where the north sought touch with the south. Breezes from every point blew towards Venice and slackened in its atmosphere. Wealth came upon their wings, and art, and learning, and a myriad interests unknown elsewhere. But noxious vapours streamed into its vortex, and side by side with its industries and splendours strange vices reigned, and taught the world their corrupt mysteries.

Into this city of the nations, whither men journeyed from the ends of the earth, and whence men returned sore smitten many of them with its plagues, Sidney rode late in the autumn of 1573, nineteen years old, but already mannered as became a courtier, and illustrious with the prestige of his youth. Like the knight of holiness, his eyes were opened wide, his heart was in God's keeping. He had come to learn what things "were lovely and of good report," to leave what things were noisome. He stayed in Italy eight months, and, but for visits to Padua and Genoa, this time was spent in Venice. When the magnificoes bade him to their banquets he attended and charmed his haughty hosts; but he lived a life guarded from the taint which infected "Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop."

He had society enough. There were German nobles—Protestants like himself; there were men of letters, to whom Languet had commended him; there were statesmen, to whom the Earl of Leicester was his warranty; there were grave merchants, who could tell him the secrets of the dawn; there were men of science, who

had turned over the fresh page of knowledge and held the key to its cipher; there were artists who had sat at the feet of Titian, and had learned the utmost lesson of his palette. Sidney must have met Tintoretto, and to our knowledge he was acquainted with Paolo Veronese, who painted his portrait. He sent it as a keepsake to old Languet, who rejoiced in it, and who by-and-by sent him a stiff portrait of himself, treasured in the gallery at Penshurst. He was not always satisfied with Philip; and when we look at the narrow face with its intensity and fine intolerant integrity, we can understand how, loving very few, he would exact a rigorous return from whom he loved, and would have little patience with a constancy less contracted than his own. Philip did not always find the leisure to write him detailed letters, and Hubert grumbled with the petulance of a child, being surprised into a warmth of affection scarcely in season with his years, beautiful as buds in autumn and pathetic as are these.

There was much to be studied in Venice. The language of Italy, its literature, and particularly the first work of Tasso, who was at Ferrara that very winter,

busy with *Aminta*, finishing his *Jerusalem Delivered*, and perhaps awaking to that love that was his doom; these occupied him, and he read as well every history of Venice on which he could lay his hands. Astronomy, too, the science fostered by Italy, engaged some studious hours, and we hear of his attempts to master music. These failed, however, and he played but poorly on the lute. After two months in Venice, he paid a visit to the University of Padua, where Languet had paved his way, and where he may have encountered Tasso, who sometimes stayed there.

When he went back to Venice, it was as one used to its resources, and he was able to disengage his mind from these and give it to Italian politics. These were complicated enough and full of surprises, whose order, however, followed a certain pattern peculiar to North Italy in those days. More interesting to him was all news of the great struggle between the faiths, and this he learned not only from Hubert Languet, but from the Germans in Venice, who were his constant companions. Venice was a centre for such news, and got its gossip from Rome as well as from the world beyond the Alps.

Some details he thought worthy to be sent to England, and his letters to Leicester were duly valued and committed to official keeping. They would claim the Queen's notice for her favourite's nephew, and vouch for him, when he was presented at her Court.

A visit to Genoa, whither he was accompanied by Count Philip Lewis of Hanau, furnished good Languet with another grievance, and the summer was well advanced before he set out on his return to Vienna. Perhaps his letters to Leicester won for him leave to stay another year abroad. It is certain that he did so, and that the autumn and winter following his stay in Italy were spent at Vienna, where he was attached to the English embassy.

There he found Edward Wotton, a comrade to his mind, enrolled upon the list of lifelong friends. Together they took lessons in riding, an accomplishment of great importance for the courtiers of their time, and no mere trot and canter exercise as now. Their master—Pugliano—was an enthusiast for his art. He taught the management of the horse—whose virtues he extolled as superhuman—in all its complexity, and

Philip Sidney learned to be the most graceful rider of his time.

The royal summons to return to England arrived in March 1575, but he had leave to take the road in easy stages, and he spent time in Prague, Heidelberg, and Strasburg. From Strasburg, too, he rode back to Frankfort, as Hubert Languet had business there which brought him from Prague, and begged Philip to return so far. Then, after a week or two at Frankfort, he retraced his steps, and journeyed on to Antwerp. Here he fell ill and was hindered from immediate crossing, so that it was June and summer when he came to England. His parents were at home, and after the glad reunion he probably went straight to Leicester House.

The Earl of Leicester was in the heyday of royal favour, and presented Philip at Court. He won the Queen's goodwill, and was bidden attend her during the summer's progress.

It is easy to understand his quick acceptance. In his twenty-first year he added to the charm of youth the ease, self-possession, and experience of riper years. Already skilled in Courts, of rare personal distinction, dis-

creet in intercourse, shrewd, ready-witted, and appreciative, he made no blunders. Behind the graces of his nature and his nurture there was the steady flower of faith to purify and refine his manhood. His very appearance was suffused with its glow. The delicate features, the broad brow, the limpid, penetrating eyes, the sensitive colour which came and went, the gentle expression, candid and strong, won for him universal trust, the reverence even of his foes. No more beautiful lines were ever penned than those in which Matthew Roydon gave expression to this influence:—

“ A sweet attractive kind of grace ;
A full assurance given by looks ;
Continual comfort in a face ;
The lineaments of gospel books ;—
I trow that count'nance cannot lye,
Whose thoughts are legible in the eye.”

The reddish gold of his hair was a heritage from both Sidneys and Dudleys, and was a passport in itself at Elizabeth's Court, where auburn hair was in high favour. We know that he was a linguist, a horseman, a swordsman, a graceful dancer. He was borne on the hands

of statesmen. The Chief of the Ordnance was his uncle Warwick; the Secretary of State was Sir Francis Walsingham; the Royal Treasurer was Sir William Cecil; the favourite was his uncle Leicester; his sister Mary was a maid of honour; his friends Greville and Dyer were in the Queen's service. Every circumstance but wealth conspired to favour his entry into the magic circle, and his narrow means meant honest living in an unscrupulous age.

The Court of Queen Elizabeth has exercised the pens of many writers, and the impression which they have recorded may suffice for our imagination. Its central and dominant figure was the Queen herself. Her power of personal command, her ability, her intolerance of control, made her memorable. At this time she seemed a providence to her Protestant people, who adored her. A thousand difficulties beset her, an effervescence of dangers threatened her person and her land. Through the former she steered with a not entirely noble craft; the latter she escaped unharmed, although at last they vexed her nerves and upset her judgment. Her vanity perhaps dulls most her reputation; and yet, when we

remember with what flattery she was approached, what real admiration there was for her ability, from what terror she had released her land, how from her will there radiated power, and place, and fame, we cannot wonder that the fumes of an incessant incense mounted to her brain. The coquetry which made her Court dramatic complicated her action, and led to the sore discouragement of those who served her best; but it infinitely strengthened her temporary prestige, and surrounded her with dexterous homage. Into this atmosphere,—where the Queen directed all things, affairs of State and matters of little moment, and set the stamp of her own character on great and small,—Philip Sidney stepped, and won at once the approval of her keen intelligence. He seems from the first to have excited her half-maternal admiration and indulgence.

The stately circle was in commotion. Doublets, mantles, and ruffs were packed in spacious coffers, and the farthingales and brocades of ladies-in-waiting and maids of honour were coaxed and folded into portable receptacles. The first stage in the itinerary was Kenilworth, where Sidney was in a manner at home, and

welcome to the Earl of Leicester, the Queen's host. What need to dwell upon those eighteen days of brilliant shows and banquets? Neither in Paris, Vienna, or Venice can Philip have endured a sequence of such exhausting gaieties. More interesting to us is the third stage of the costly progress, when the Queen's quarters were at Chartley Castle, where her cousin, the Countess of Essex, was hostess.

Essex himself was in Ireland, comforted in his misfortunes there by pretty letters from Elizabeth, whose neat phrases were his sole emolument. It was not till after the royal visit that he returned to Chartley; but in the meantime Philip had commended himself to Lady Essex, and had met the Penelope Devereux who, some years later, grew from childhood into sprightly and beautiful girlhood, was mated to her sorrow, and won immortality as Sidney's "Stella." She was only twelve years old when first he met her. Her father, the Earl of Essex, left Ireland that very month, and Sir Henry Sidney—who seems to have been at Chartley too—kissed hands and returned to his post as Deputy. It was hard to part so soon from his son, and the burden of pain

must have rested with him. Philip had his mother and sister at Court, and was already a centre of attraction.

But there was a gap in the home circle, for Ambrosia had died in early summer, and Philip had to mourn the loss of his first playmate. Mary, although maid of honour to the Queen, was only fourteen years old, and his acquaintance with her, after so long absence, was all to make. She was very lovely, resembling him in person and temperament, with a mind serious, reflective, and penetrating. How each must have leaned toward the other for communion and for the spirit of wisdom which was in both!

The Court returned to London early in October, and the great houses were refilled. Philip's quarters were with his uncle at Leicester House, where the Earl was the centre of a crowd of guests and pensioners. Amongst his better qualities may be counted his esteem for talent. Men of parts found welcome at his board; and poets, play-wrights, and scholars sought admission to his following. Their wit, the greater grace of their flattery, their knowledge, appealed to a sense more discriminating than common; for the man would scarcely have been so fas-

cinating had not some worth lent credit to his craft and vanity. Philip liked him sincerely, and valued his good name; and it is very probable that in no other house would he have found a society so much to his mind, so far as its need of cultured and varied intercourse was concerned.

Lord Essex and his wife, young Robert and Penelope Devereux, had come to Durham House, where Philip paid them many a visit. Essex was older by twelve or fourteen years, but purity of purpose and a common integrity drew them to each other; and the friendship must have been a consolation to the Earl, thwarted, betrayed, and neglected in that last sad year of his life. In the May of 1576 the Queen did him sufficient grace to remember his services, and appointed him Earl-Marshal of Ireland; and as Sir Henry Sidney greatly desired his son's company, Philip went to Dublin with his friend in July.

Sir Henry was hard at work in rebellious Connaught at the time, but hastened to Dublin early in August, and assisted at the Earl-Marshal's investiture, with due splendour of entertainment. The father rejoiced at

Philip's actual arrival, and the two were together during many a rough and dangerous experience at Athlone and in Galway for some weeks.

Late in September news reached them that Essex was on his deathbed, and desired the comfort of Philip's presence. His illness had begun soon after the Sidneys left Dublin, had waxed during the month, and was waning with his life. Indeed, the end had come before Philip could mount and ride in quick response. As he stood beside the bed on which his dead friend lay, the last sacred words and wishes were delivered to him, and he learned how Essex had loved him. "I wish him well"—the farewell ran,—"so well that, if God move their hearts, I wish that he might match with my daughter. I call him son: he is so wise, virtuous, and godly."

Already the past was become an Appian Way, and tomb stood behind tomb to consecrate its vista.

From Dublin Sidney returned to England. The Queen was at Greenwich, where he rejoined her Court. The dying Earl's wishes were known in its circle, but neither Leicester nor Philip was eager for the marriage.

The latter shrank from putting a period to his freedom. His hopes were occupied rather with his career and its opportunities than with plans for domestic happiness. Penelope Devereux was only thirteen years old; there was time enough—should she prove attractive—to woo and win her. His uncle had private and personal reasons for discouraging the proposal.

The little Earl of Essex, three years younger than his sister, was placed in Lord Burghley's care.

Philip was often put to it to pay his debts for the fine doublets and hose, which were Court wear. There were servants to keep, and armour, and horses; there were New Year's gifts to distribute, beginning with a costly *douceur* to her Majesty; there were shows and ceremonies at which to ruffle it gallantly; there were books and hospitalities, although these last may have fallen to Leicester's count. The Flintshire living would hardly stretch to all this expenditure. A dole from the Queen's pocket came his way at rarest intervals, but the mere keeping abreast of each day's requirements must have plunged him in some perturbed arithmetic. We hope that he had saved in Venice, and picked up lengths of

lace and velvet on which to draw for ruff and mantle. It is certain that he contrived to cut a brave appearance, for the Queen misliked a shabby courtier, and we know that she smiled on Sidney.

Indeed, this winter his opportunity seemed at hand. The Emperor Maximilian died early in October. Perhaps the news had shortened Philip's stay in Ireland, for such events implied a solemn interchange of ceremony between the Courts—and who could better bend the knee at that of Vienna than Philip, who knew its language and its etiquette? Leicester helped him to plead for the ambassador's post, and Elizabeth, aware of his exceptional fitness, selected him.

The event meant nothing short of a crisis in Europe. Rudolph II. was as perverse and unenlightened as his father had been tolerant and wise. His accession meant a triumph for Spain, in whose dull bigotry and relentless policy he had been educated by his mother. All Europe that was Protestant had reason to fear the change.

To Philip Sidney, kept well informed by Hubert Languet, the movement seemed ripe for decisive in-

tervention. England must show some initiative disposition towards a Protestant alliance. Elizabeth granted him, if not a free hand, at all events a free tongue. He had leave to urge his mind upon the new-crowned Emperor, but, we may be sure, no leave to act. Still, straight speaking was a kind of action, and might involve its consequences, and Philip was glad of credentials which scarcely granted all his plea.

The embassy had a double debt to pay. Ostensibly it bore the English Queen's condolences not only to Rudolph, but to Lewis, the Elector Palatine, whose father died two days after Maximilian. In the Palatinate, Protestantism was torn in two,—Lutherans and Calvinists wasting their strength in mutual conflict. Philip had a word in season to drop at the Elector's Court as well as at the Emperor's.

His preparations were elaborate. To represent the Majesty of England he had need of more display than could be made by a few retainers and their steeds. Two knights and half-a-dozen gentlemen were chosen for his company, and with their retinue and horses must have roused the echoes of every town and hamlet on

their road. Good custom, too, they would bring to the hostelries of Belgium and of Germany.

Wherever Philip lodged, a tablet, which announced his ambassadorial dignity, was displayed, and showed his sense that not he, but England, was in question. For six years later, when he was made a knight and bore his shield, he chose a motto that abjured all glory for himself; but, as mouthpiece of Elizabeth, he took on airs of greatness and gathered toll of honour as he went.

He was but scantily furnished with means for this equipment. The royal grant was quite inadequate, but Sir Henry Sidney supplemented it with a gift of £350, worth nearly £3000 of our present money.

The first halt of importance was at Brussels, whence Sidney rode to Lorraine to see Don John of Austria, King Philip's viceroy in the Spanish Netherlands. About the middle of March the embassy arrived at Heidelberg, capital of the Palatinate, where Hubert Languet met it. The Elector was from home, but Sidney made the acquaintance of Count John Casimir, younger brother to Lewis, and head of the Calvinist faction. His messages were of two sorts—one of friendly advice to the factions

to square their differences; the other more pertinent to Elizabeth, to ask repayment of some money which she had lent to the late Elector. His son, John Casimir, gave little hope on either count, but impressed Sidney with his goodwill to comply with the Queen's wishes. The treasury was empty, and bankruptcy threatened the Palatinate. Philip did little more than make a friend of John Casimir, and acquaint himself fully with Electoral affairs.

He left after five days' stay and journeyed to Prague, which he had visited two years earlier with Hubert Languet, who was once more his companion, and, in all affairs requiring special knowledge, his informant and counsellor. It was a happy chance for Languet that Philip had been sped upon this mission, and took a road familiar to himself. Together they entered Prague in good time to celebrate Good Friday with the Court. For Rudolph was King of Bohemia, and was there to ratify his accession and to look into the Hussite disaffection so obstinately stamped upon the country.

When the Easter ceremonies were over, Philip donned

his dignity and presented his letters to the Emperor. The haughty Prince, sullen and taciturn, dark-browed and self-absorbed, surrounded by "Spaniolated" nobles, must have offered a lively contrast to the frank and fair young Englishman, ardent with his message, yet stately, with the poise of perfect discipline and the sense of England's greatness. Condolences and congratulations from his sovereign were quickly spoken, and Philip went on to offer her advice. Elizabeth had been the wise old Emperor's friend: she desired to be the friend of Rudolph too. But there were rumours that he might forsake the policy of peace and plunge all Germany in war. What end could this attain but anarchy—what ultimate result but the supremacy of Spain, which involved the destruction of Germany? And there Philip left the track of his directions, and let himself loose upon an impetuous wave of impulse. Hubert Languet was the impassioned embodiment of the Protestant alliance. Here was a chance of sounding its blast in ears seldom to be reached. Philip, screwed up to the sticking-point, attacked the very influences which had moulded Rudolph's mind, which

energised his policy, which armed and garrisoned the reaction he effected. Startled at his aggression, the Emperor's unready jesuitry kept silence, and Philip mistook the omen. He urged on Austria the cause of religion and of liberty, the *Fædus Evangelicum*, which might secure them. His words were vain. Rudolph recovered his composure, tendered his thanks for Elizabeth's courtesies, and changed the subject of conversation.

There were subsidiary visits to be paid, with messages from the Queen of England to the widowed Empress, and a few days were needed for further knowledge of the turn affairs had taken, so that April was nearly ended when the embassy took leave of Rudolph. During the interval, Sidney was entertained by the more learned residents of Prague, and distinguished himself in table-talk. When he left, adorned with a new gold chain to mark the Emperor's respect for Elizabeth's envoy, Hubert Languet travelled with him.

They went to Neustadt to see the Elector and to intercede for the persecuted Calvinists, then paid a visit

to the Landgrave of Hesse, and reached Cologne about the middle of May. Here the two friends had to part, Languet having made sacrifice of time and strength "for the incredible delight of their intercourse." They must have taken farewell depressed more than by the separation, with the sense of failure in their efforts for the cause.

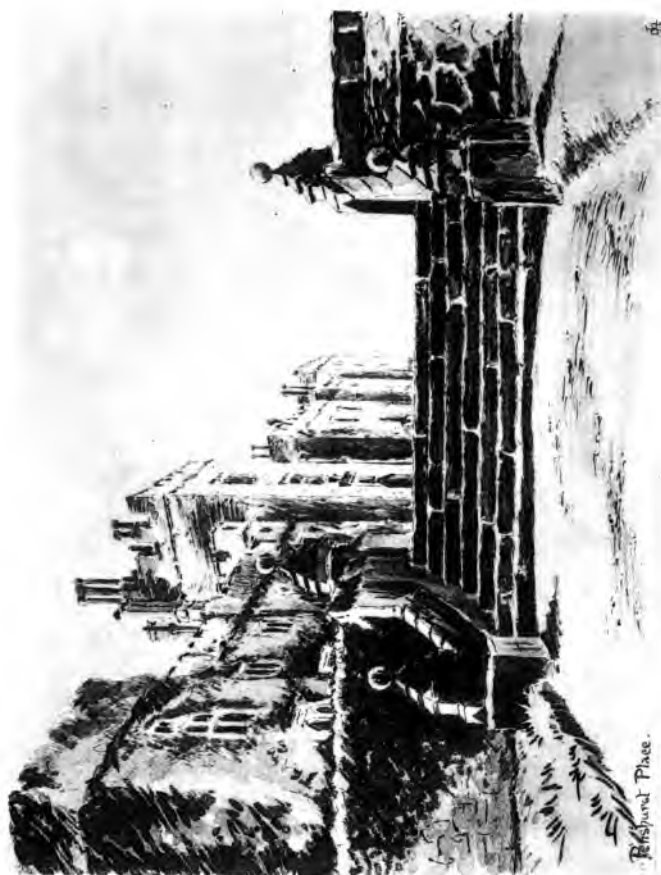
Philip waited at Cologne for his despatches, and when they came, rejoiced to find amongst them the Queen's mandate to turn aside to Dordrecht and to convey her congratulations to William of Orange on the birth of his son. He spent five days with the Prince, and stood godfather at the baby's christening. William was just double Sidney's age, and was experienced in men. The young ambassador excited his admiration, and his expectation that wisdom so early matured and of so fine a quality would prove serviceable to England in years to come. In him, Philip would find a ready listener to the scheme of which his own mind was full, and he left the Netherlands convinced that William and Elizabeth alone amongst the princes of Europe cared in any large sense for

Protestantism, and had realised that Spain held the fetters for binding Christendom.

In June, Sidney returned to England and reported to Elizabeth at Greenwich the issue of his various charges.

He stood higher than ever in the royal favour, and resumed the half-attractive and half-wearisome routine of Court attendance. During his absence, his sister Mary had married the Earl of Pembroke, a man in the prime of life and a widower, while she was little more than a child—a girl sixteen years old. But Lord Pembroke made her, on the whole, an excellent husband, and the marriage afforded Philip a further backing of influence and the comfort of his sister's homes.

Leicester House had grown, perhaps, a little distasteful to him during this year of his uncle's intrigue with Lady Essex, of which Philip must have been aware, as well as of the secret marriage in which it culminated in 1578. All Leicester's show of romantic devotion to the Queen, which for a time beguiled her, must have been unpleasing to his single-minded nephew, who would be glad to relieve the strain by change of residence.



Richmond Place.

We find him often staying at Baynard's Castle, Pembroke's London house, and at Wilton, the Earl's country house, designed by Holbein, and just three miles from Salisbury.

He maintained a steady correspondence with Hubert Languet, whose letters were full of warnings, advice, and information, varied with affectionate outbreaks of impatience at his delays and trivial occupation. Languet, no doubt, expected rapid advance in State employment for Philip, and chafed at his apparent absorption in balls and banquets. Philip chafed too, but he could not force occasion, and his career depended on the Queen, whose caprice it was to keep him idle. Languet expended himself in futile suggestions,—that Philip should be King of Poland, that he should marry this or that great lady, abroad or at home; but these were only fret and fume. The Queen liked his presence at her Court, and no doubt held herself entitled to keep him there—for the savour of his ready wit, of his grace in knightly exercise, of his serenity and good counsel, of his scholarship and distinction. For rumours of his fame abroad had reached her, and she had no mind to lose “the jewel of her times.”

All this summer, however, Philip was busy about a matter of no mere trivial import. If he fell in with the Queen's humour, and played the part of "paragon" at Whitehall, Greenwich, Richmond, and Windsor, he had an end to serve, dearer to himself than emprise or romance. This was his father's honour, which was imperilled by calumny too welcome to the Queen. It seems to have been as difficult then as now to speak the truth about Ireland, to give impartial and unselfish evidence with regard to its condition. Sir Henry Sidney still held the *siège périlleux* of its government, and with courage—never bettered—he continued to govern for, as well as over, its rebellious people. Some of the most brilliant of the nobles of the Pale ruffled it at Court. The Earl of Ormond was their leader and mouthpiece. The sempiternal woes of the absentee landlord were rehearsed in Elizabeth's ears, and mightily convinced her, when the Deputy's little bills for enforcing just taxation and allaying rebellion drove them home.

The noble Deputy was in bad odour with her Majesty, and Philip knew whose glozing tongue had marred his father's merit. When Ormond thought to greet him

at Oatlands, where the Queen was on a visit, Philip stiffened with a fine repulse and turned upon his heel. The Earl had the grace to send no challenge to the son "bound to defend his father's cause"; but the incident determined Philip's action.

This needed courage come to full tide, for the Queen was misinformed, incensed against Sir Henry Sidney, and her mood jumped with a natural prejudice. He wrote a lengthy letter to Elizabeth, in which he set down the whole argument for his father's policy. The latter half of this document remains, and exhibits not only Philip's acquaintance with the Deputy's aims, and the opposition encountered from men incapable of appreciating them, but to an astonishing degree his own insight into the problem of Irish affairs. He held a brief for his father's government, not for the Pale, nor for the people. With stern pen he chronicled the character of either. The nobles robbed and wasted the country's wealth, and oppressed the tribes, till crime and turbulence were the sole outlet of their manhood. The people were obstinate and lawless, delighted in faction, and resented discipline; but

they groaned under the oppressors, whose untempered tyranny bade them sweat in sorrow. Sir Henry Sidney sought to do justice to the people and to bring them under law. His plan for levying taxes from rich as well as poor, for bringing justice home to rich as well as poor, for making tyranny as criminal as sedition, aimed at this, and roused against him both oppressor and oppressed. The one resented the check of law, the other the shackles of civilisation.

This well-reasoned defence was handed to the Queen at Windsor some time towards the end of September. Prepared by Philip's attitude to his father's accusers, unwilling to lose his presence in her following, she read it carefully and admitted its force. For some months the Deputy was encouraged in his hard and valorous task, and his friends at home were comforted by Philip's prevailing advocacy. It was indeed his very faculty to seize the core of complicated circumstances, and to lay it bare without exaggeration on either hand. Undistracted by outward shows, he penetrated to the deep principles of action, which mould results, and mature nations, as they do individuals.

Conscious of his own nature, he could apprehend when force warred against force in the larger field.

Next year, however, Elizabeth yielded again to her own obstinate prepossessions and to Lord Ormond's insinuations, and Sir Henry suffered both vexatious interference and recall.

The year 1578 was full of interest to Philip Sidney, and marks his gradual rise to a somewhat illustrious position as the fosterer of learning and literature at the English Court. He had not yet broken ground as a poet,—at all events not as one whose verses were in circulation,—but he formed a literary coterie, himself its president. Edmund Spenser, a year and a half his senior, was about this time introduced by Gabriel Harvey to the Earl of Leicester, and stayed at Leicester House for some months, either as guest or as secretary to his host. Here Sidney not only made his acquaintance, but delighted in his company.

Spenser had already planned his *Faerie Queene*, and had even written some of its scenes. We cannot doubt that he talked the work over with Sidney, and that Philip on his side contributed reminiscences of

Tasso and his monumental myths. The two would find plenty to discuss in the wide field of Italian literature—its epics, allegories, pastorals, lyrics, and sonnets—as they rode together to Penshurst, to note the progress of the Lord Deputy's additions. In town their talk was reinforced by Greville and Edmund Dyer, and the quartette would criticise the early blossoms on that bough from Italy which was grafted on the tree of English thought. Manner rather than matter was its contribution to the sturdy growth. Wyatt, Surrey, and Sackville had framed their sonnets and blank verse upon Italian models, but the frame was loosely jointed, and the sentiments were English. To the four young men their experiments were full of promise and showed the way. To them it was a worthy ambition to lead the thought of England into Italian channels. Were not these a heritage from golden ages, and did they not convey to Europe the stream of inspiration, which welled up still from Helicon? These talks resulted in the *Areopagus*, a half-serious and half-social club, which met to make experiments in form, and to drill

our English phrases into lengths of line and stanza, classic, rhymeless, and reformed.

William Shakspeare was still a boy when the Areopagus held its earliest meetings, and the strong sweep of his unfettered pinions was never heard by Philip Sidney, who would have flung his measures to the wind at their first rhythmic beat. Indeed he tired of classic niceties in time, and two years later escaped from their limitations; but for these years he and his friends amused themselves with their exercise, and perhaps trained their mind in so doing. He kept his experiments for after-setting in the *Arcadia*, a work of the imagination, which was doubtless amplified in his day-dreams during the season of his companionship with Spenser.

But the first work from his pen made public was one of an order much in vogue at Elizabeth's Court.

In the spring of 1578 she began a round of visits to her most favoured courtiers, and the first of May found her at Wanstead, the guest of the Earl of Leicester. To help his uncle with her entertainment Philip com-

posed a May-day masque, which gave her welcome as she walked about the pleasaunce. The story involved her in its plot, and Elizabeth yielded to the compliment, which made her umpire between the suitors whose several worthiness confused the mind of the "Lady of May." This pretty contrivance scarcely ranked as literature, although the Queen was charmed with its flatteries, and the Court echoed her verdict. Philip's reputation caught an added lustre, for, from the dawn of her great day, the daughter of King Henry VIII., herself learned in every literature, was quick to foster the firstlings of what inspiration was newly astir in England. The mind of her country had cast its shroud and was arisen from the dead.

Philip had need of all his influence with the Queen at this time. His father was again out of favour, and was so cruelly harassed by the treacheries of his foes that he had a mind to give up his work in Ireland and to retire from active service. The strain on Philip's nerves was extreme. It was his complicated duty to keep the Queen amused, to bear the constant presence of his father's traducers at Court, to comfort his father

and advise him, to hold his own position hampered by poverty, and to fulfil the claims upon his time and patronage which pressed from all directions. And it overcame his temper once when some betrayal, meaner and more malignant than the rest, roused him to suspicion of his father's secretary, whom he threatened with the dagger for reading his letters. Molyneux vindicated his integrity, not without gentle reproof, and their mutual esteem was restored.

But Sir Henry was recalled from Ireland, and joined his wife, who was ill and in narrow quarters at Hampton Court, where only one small room was allotted to her. It is touching to think of those two faithful servants of the Queen suffering such scant requital. The reports of his duty in Ireland were badly received, and he was glad to quit the Court for Ludlow Castle, to resume there his alternative office. What a sigh of relief marks his return to the Welsh! "A better people to govern, or better subjects to their sovereign, Europe holdeth not." That he should have borne to serve that sovereign longer points to the extraordinary hold upon the general mind maintained by the prin-

ciple of monarchy, and intensified by the power of command which made Elizabeth herself impressive.

The same force kept Philip Sidney at Court. He was weary of its ways, and longed for noble adventure. The Queen had salved her conscience of guilt towards Sir Henry by some trifling post conferred on Philip. It probably added a mite to his resources, and kept him attached to her retinue, but it afforded no occupation for his spare energies. His friend John Casimir was in the Netherlands making show of fight against Spain, and he had invited Sidney to join him. But this was before the Deputy's return, and he had sacrificed his longing for the experience to his father's need of an advocate at Court. Now the opportunity was over. Another field for the venturesome was the New World. Philip was deeply interested in every attempt to explore its shores, and to found colonies wherever its territory offered advantage. He believed that by establishing a Protestant empire in America, England could foil the plans of Philip of Spain, and rescue the world from reaction and the Papacy. To America he looked for refuge for every persecuted Protestant remnant in Europe. And

that this hope for the struggling liberty of faith was general, we take to be proved by the voyage of the Mayflower half a century later.

In the meantime, Sidney not only favoured every expedition which could be fitted out for colonisation, but he was the chief promoter of more than one, securing money and co-operation from his richer relatives, and even embarking what small sums he could spare in the enterprise. One after another of these failed to affect its aim, and Philip had to suffer disappointment, but he continued to believe that they offered the best means of checking the ubiquitous Spanish interference. He would gladly have gone with Frobisher in the fruitless expedition of 1578, but the Queen kept him in strict attendance, and he had to be contented with furthering its preparation.

Languet shared his hopes from this scheme of offence and defence against Spain, and cheered him as one attempt failed after another.

That a great sadness had settled upon Philip during these years of Court service and inaction is certain, for he confided to Languet the melancholy which invaded

his captive youth, the temptations which beset him, the dangers of idleness—or rather of the facile duties which occupied his time without calling on those sterner activities which purify young manhood—the proneness to yield to ever-present allurements, to forfeit the pure heart and clean hands of his Christian endeavour. It touches us to learn that he longed “to flee from the glitter of Court;” but Languet bade him possess his soul in patience, and by perseverance in discipline achieve the “glory of victory.”

It was no sinecure to be a Christian not in name only at Elizabeth’s Court, and the aureole which gilds his memory is misty with tears and interwoven with thorns.

Early in 1579 he had the comfort of a visit from Hubert Languet, who came in the train of Prince John Casimir, and arrived at the Tower of London on January 23. For three weeks Languet was witness to Philip’s position at Court, too favoured for Philip’s own contentment. The plain Huguenot did not greatly admire the tone of a circle given over to advancement by flattery, and perhaps understood better than before his friend’s yearning for wholesome employment.

Philip made him acquainted very specially with his parents and sister, and with Greville and Dyer. All of these pleased Languet, and all of them learned to value Philip's friend. Robert Sidney—one of the two boys who brought up the rear in Sir Henry's family—was just ready for the final stage in his education, and was committed to Languet's care when the visitors left England. For parting advice, Sir Henry bade him emulate his brother Philip—"a rare ornament of this age."

The Court, during 1579, became less and less a sphere to Sidney's mind. A project was on foot to revive the negotiations for a marriage between Elizabeth and her old suitor. The latter was now Duke of Anjou, his brother Henry being King of France. In England the Massacre of St Bartholomew seemed to be forgotten, and some posturings of Anjou as the foe of Spain were taken in good faith. It may be that Elizabeth was not deceived, but that she enjoyed the French attentions, and played off Anjou on her ministers in her own fashion. The union was gravely discussed, and split the Court into two factions. Leicester headed the opposition, and Sidney with his friends supported him. But some per-

sonal enemy of the Earl betrayed to the French ambassador his marriage a year before, and Du Simier hastened to inform the Queen. The blow was smart. Elizabeth's vanity, wounded a second time by her fickle favourite, confused her judgment, and she banished him from Court. On this the wily Frenchman had relied, and he plumed himself on having removed the only serious barrier. The French party, with Oxford at its head, grew influential at Court, and Sidney, although retained, was made to feel himself on sufferance. None the less, Elizabeth liked him well enough to admit him to her presence, and to grant him speech on what concerned him.

Fulke Greville and Edmund Dyer were in full sympathy with their friend. Oxford, who had always detested the gentle and temperate courtier, seized this time of suspense to insult him. He swaggered into the Whitehall tennis-court, which was overlooked by a gallery filled with nobles-in-waiting, and ordered Sidney and his party to make way for him. Philip answered him with dignified reproof, which roused the braggart's insolence, and he shouted "Puppy!" for retort. The

Frenchmen and courtiers hurried down-stairs to see the upshot. Philip gave Oxford the lie, and left the place. The Earl did not dare to challenge him until Philip sent to know his mind, bidding him take counsel of his French companions. But in the meantime the matter had come to the Queen's ears, and sending for Sidney, she rated him and ordered him to make apology. This he refused to do, and Oxford had to swallow the affront. The incident was in effect a flicker of the hatred which smouldered between the two factions at Court, and it is evident that Philip's part in it was forced upon him and was commended by his friends.

The situation grew acute. Elizabeth's conduct was hard to read, although we cannot but suspect that wrath with Leicester was the key to its cipher. She continued to favour the Earl of Oxford and the Frenchmen, and Philip Sidney found that it needed all his courage to remain at Court. But he was equal to the strait, and showed a serene front in the very face of his enemies for three months longer.

Then, urged to a task entirely heroic, both by his own judgment and by the encouragement of his friends, he

embodied the arguments of his party in a long letter to the Queen. Perhaps of all men to whom Protestantism was the hope of Europe, this young courtier,—unofficial, under displeasure, but clear-sighted and of flawless courage,—was the one fitted to tell Elizabeth the truth. He knew better than any English statesman of his day the issue between the religions. He forgot no experience and trifled with no illusion. He ventured his all in unvarnished statement of the case as it lay between sovereign and people, between Protestantism betrayed and Spain triumphant. With perfect courtesy he portrayed Elizabeth—the hope of her people—cast out from their hearts, reviled upon their tongues, did she so forsake the Church which she was sworn to protect. With finest grace he recalled to her mind her own liberty and dignity, her own averment that marriage was not for her; and he did not hesitate to draw the suitor's portrait in blackest outlines as a reprobate and a traitor, “a son of the Jezebel of our age.”

This letter was presented to the Queen shortly after New Year's Day in 1580. It was her pleasure to frown upon the writer, and Philip withdrew from Court. He

went first to Penshurst, and toward the end of March to Wilton, where he spent all spring and summer with his sister. The Countess of Pembroke was in delicate health, and was spared attendance at Whitehall. Wilton had been rebuilt in Henry VIII.'s reign from designs partly made by Holbein, and was a stately mansion overlooking the grassy downs of Wiltshire. Wood and water checkered its pleasant demesne, and from time immemorial the plains around had been used as pasturage for sheep. Here Philip, in "these his not old years and idlest times," found rest after a prolonged struggle, and sympathy after the sore discomfiture of his unprized integrity. Here, too, he had time for a new activity, which could, better than mere repose, allay the fever of disappointment and restore his harassed nerves. His sister was one with him in every interest of his life; they were strong in one faith, they shared the same political creed; she, as well as he, had ventured money in Frobisher's and Drake's expeditions; she, as well as he, found refreshing in nature and in books. Fallen upon "idlest times," Philip rescued them from reproach, and the Countess of Pembroke helped him in every pursuit.

Before he left the Court, a young play-wright called Stephen Gosson had dedicated to him a treatise, which fell foul of the plays, poetry, and music of the time. Gosson had been converted to Puritanism by some earnest pulpit blast, which inveighed against the desecration of Sunday by theatrical performances. These were customary, and diverted the people from the Church influence, whose tide had set in towards a greater earnestness. Gosson, with the best intention, somewhat confused the issue, and levelled his attack at all writers on secular subjects, and more particularly at dramatists and poets. It was no doubt in search of sympathy for his invective against all that ministered to worldliness that Gosson inscribed it to Sidney, whose life and conversation commended him to the fathers of Puritanism. But Sidney's well-tempered judgment rejected extravagance, and although he may have thanked Gosson for the compliment, and given him full acknowledgment of all that made for righteousness in his treatise, his mind for some time after was occupied with every precedent and argument which could reinstate the art of poetry.

Amongst these were not only the uses of poetry in

days when it was the history of nations, but its power in devotion. He and his sister together studied the Psalms ascribed to David, and planned a metrical version, which occupied some of this leisure. Philip turned into rhymed verse the first forty-three Psalms, and the Countess of Pembroke continued the task.

Philip had ceased to toy with the unrhymed stanza, and used every conceivable plan of measure and rhyme in his versions. Psalm XV., for instance, is rendered in thirteen lines of twelve syllables each, all ending in the same sound; and several others fail of their full effect, because of a certain curiousness in rhyme. Perhaps the forms which we possess were not intended to stand as they appear. But we must not look to these forty-three Psalms for Sidney's best constructive work. Probably he used the exercise as partly devotional, and may have sung their Englished measures on Sabbath evenings at Wilton. But it is certain that he delighted in the grandeur of the Psalmist's thoughts, and made notes of the pure poetry which they contain.

The whole subject of poetry was not overtaken at this time. The Countess of Pembroke was busy with the

cares of motherhood, for her baby was born a few weeks after Philip's arrival, and the christening was fixed for April 28th. The Queen honoured the young Countess by accepting the *rôle* of sponsor, although she was not present at the ceremony. Neither was the Earl of Leicester, who scarcely dared to show himself during his disgrace; but Philip represented him at the font, and the Earl of Warwick was there himself to act as third sponsor to his grand-nephew. The baby was christened William, and grew to be the friend of Shakspeare, and to be caught up into his fame and made immortal. Sir Henry Sidney's headquarters were at Ludlow for the summer, and we may picture him amongst the circle, rejoicing over his first grandchild. We know that Philip's presence at Wilton was a great attraction to his father, for in June the testy Queen sent the President a message to bid him bide at his post. As usual he was out of favour, and the object of more than one spiteful rating.

While his sister was invalided, Philip had leisure to ride about the downs and boscages. John Aubrey tells us how his forebears had often seen Sidney on horseback,

musings as he rode, and setting down his meditations in his "table-book."

The shepherd of that day wore a long woollen cloak, with a cape to his waist woven of home-spun. He held the crook in his hand, and carried sling, flute, and tar-box in his wallet. The shepherdess wore kirtle and straw-hat, and while she watched her sheep, knitted stockings of home-spun. They were clumsy folk, but kindly, and had games and dances of their own. Music wiled away the intervals between those short crises of bustle which mark the shepherd's calendar, and they could sing duos and quartettes on occasion. The married shepherds had a share in their masters' flocks, and the fleeces of this fee in kind yielded wool for the spinning. The youths beguiled the hours with rustic courtship and flirtation. The scenes were a canto in the unending epic of toil, elemental here and leisured, and appealed to the poet learned in classic eclogue and Italian pastoral. Out of his long rides and dreamy reveries grew the *Arcadia*.

Doubtless it had stirred in his mind a year before, when he and Spenser forgot the present in the enchanted forest of the *Faerie Queene*, and watched the unceasing

warfare between good and evil in the deadly combats of ideal knights, who were virtues and vices personified. Perhaps, when Spenser dedicated to him the *Shepherd's Calendar*, there was talk between them of *Arcadia*, a world-ideal like the other,—with less of allegory, and a franker kinship to our own, but touched with the same purpose,—where men of valour and women of virtue, upborne by Providence, encountered every evil and prevailed. Spenser had caught the fashion of the eclogue from Italy, and had made it serve the cause of sturdy Protestant politics; and Sidney, who knew his Sannazzaro, may have felt himself in good company when he made the Wiltshire plains and lodges a setting for his story, not yet dulled by use in England.

The book was written for his sister. He rode and noted, and when he came back he sat in the library and poured out his teeming fancies upon paper, to read to the gentle mother in quiet hours of her convalescence. He called his manuscript "The Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia*," and late in the year, when he had left Wilton, parcels of the story came to her by messenger as he devised it.

It is a romantic tale, with a plot idyllic enough in its central conception, but complicated by digression to prior and collateral incidents. At first the style is poised, stiff with effort at elegance; later the narrative rushes forward on the current of vivid fancy. Upon the whole, it is more natural than laboured, and with due allowance for some conventional tediousness, it can be read with pleasure. Its heroes have each the stamp of individuality, its heroines are charming and virtuous women, its incidents are dramatic. The adventures of two princely cousins in Arcadia—after much daring and enduring elsewhere—give the story cohesion; their stratagems in love give it concentration; their final success gives it completeness. But no one of these strong qualities is conspicuous, and the perusal needs a clear head and patience. At times, draughts from the deep source of Sidney's God-fearing wisdom reward the reader. Such are: "Thrift is the fuel of magnificence;" "I am no herald to inquire of men's pedigrees, it sufficeth me if I know their virtues;" "Open suspecting others comes of secret condemning themselves;" "They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts;" and Pamela's prayer,

borrowed by Charles I. for his devotions in captivity, a use which John Milton accounted to him for unrighteousness, in that he took the petition of a pagan woman from "the vain amatorious poem of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*." The romance is varied with lyrical sonnets, with Theocritan competitions amongst the shepherds, with long-drawn eclogues, and with the unrhymed verses of 1578.

There was no thought of publication in Sidney's mind. On the contrary, he expressly dedicates it "only to you, only for you," and this must never be forgotten by its reader. Indeed, it is difficult to pardon the Countess of Pembroke for her breach of a trust which Sidney consecrated by his dying wish, that *Arcadia* should be destroyed. But published it was, and by the end of the following century had gone through seventeen editions.

The early summer passed in this employment, and when July came Sidney had word from the Earl of Leicester that the Queen was gracious again, and had recalled him to the Court. He wished his nephew to return, but Philip, in the peace of Wilton, had grown to condemn the unquiet life about the throne. He

stayed where he was until September, when a message came that Elizabeth made frequent inquiry for him. Pleading a bad cold, he managed to loiter a few weeks longer at Wilton; but excuses failed him in October, and with at least the hope of once more meeting his friends Greville and Dyer, he reappeared in the royal following.

The French courtship was still uncoiling its slow length, and we can only suppose that Elizabeth had bade her favourites have patience rather than apprehension, for from this time Leicester and Sidney made no open show of their hostility. Sidney took up his quarters at Leicester House, and seems to have continued the studies which his recall had interrupted. At all events, he wrote two wise letters to his brother Robert, who was abroad, in need of money and of experienced guidance. This young brother was worthy of Philip's care, and grew to heir his uncle's title of Earl of Leicester, and to supply, as master of Penshurst, a noble subject for Ben Jonson's praise. The letters give us clues to Philip's circumstances. One suggests that the Queen had increased his supplies,

for he forwarded money to Robert, and promised him £200 a-year besides. Another points to his study of the special subjects which he afterwards turned to account in his *Defence of Poesie*. These included history, oratory, and the poetry of all ages and nations. Begun at Wilton, they occupied his leisure in London, and he gave Robert the benefit of his conclusions. The letters are full of tender, brotherly affection and counsels, and he desires that Robert should be skilled in every manly exercise and courtly accomplishment.

There was some humour in Sidney's gifts to the Queen on New Year's Day, 1581. Probably on his reappearance much grace was shown him, and he proffered full allegiance to the sovereign whose caprice he had half resented the year before. He expressed his penitence for that defection in the form of his offerings—a heart and chain of gold and a golden-handled whip. The pretty conceits would please Elizabeth, who was, we may be sure, only too glad to have him back.

The year began with a three months' Parliament, in which Sidney sat for the shire of Kent, and which

made new laws both for the bridling of papists and of tongues inclined to speak evil of dignitaries. This points to an access of Protestantism on the part of the Queen, who had no doubt pondered on Philip's letter in spite of her huff. We find that she was cooling towards Anjou, who had made a false move about the attitude of England to the French Crown in the event of their alliance, and was, moreover, a thought too urgent with a woman whom he was not gifted to understand. Whatever show concerning him she chose to assume, his chance was really gone.

When the Parliament had done its work, Sidney had various matters for concern on hand. One was personal, and opens up a story touched with sentiment. Lady Penelope Devereux had grown to marriageable age, was well known to Sidney, and, after a fashion, was connected with him by her mother's marriage to the Earl of Leicester. Her guardians were the Earl of Huntingdon and Lord Burleigh. We know already that Burleigh preferred wealthy to poor suitors for the damsels whom he had to settle in life. Penelope was beautiful and sprightly, and Philip must have had some tender-

ness of association with regard to her, were it only the recollection of her father's dying wish for them both. Perhaps he had intended to propose for her when the time for matrimony came; but he had taken no step in that direction, and that he was not ardently impelled towards her seems proved by his prolonged absence from her neighbourhood. It is possible that he hoped to better his affairs before he ventured to come forward. That she was more in his thoughts than any other "courtly nymph" is suggested by her introduction into *Arcadia* as model for one of his heroines, the other borrowing the Countess of Pembroke's nobler beauty. Penelope herself probably regarded all eligible mankind with an equal eye, for she had a pretty talent for flirtation, inherited from the Boleyns. While Philip was biding his time and bestowing his thoughts upon papists, a match was arranged between Lord Rich and the lady. Her guardians brought the matter to Elizabeth for her favour, and as the youth was well set up in lands and funds, she gave consent. In the month of March Penelope became Lady Rich.

It is impossible to discover how Philip took the

blow. He was of good mettle, and probably swallowed his pill and got his wry face over quickly. When Anjou made his appearance in all the bravery of a confident lover in April, Sidney was ready to take a conspicuous share in the brilliant frolics with which he was welcomed. Lady Rich was in the royal retinue, and saw him tilt in "very sumptuous" armour, his horses caparisoned in cloth-of-gold. The display was an allegory for Anjou to read. Sidney, with the motto *Sic nos non nobis*, attacked in company the "Fortress of Perfect Beauty," and failed in the attempt as he was meant to do. But Anjou was not versed in poetic subtleties, and may have omened his own success from the failure of the "Foster Children of Desire," not regarding their legend.

Penelope, Lady Rich, had made a sorry match. Her lord was brutal, and she may have been at small pains to conciliate him. Their discord was no secret, and Philip pitied his friend, and perhaps himself, and slipped into relations of half-remorseful sympathy with her. His kindness would comfort her, and their friendship may have borrowed tenderness from the past and

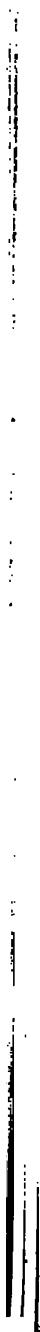
intensity from the present. But it went no farther, and scarcely ruffled the surface of Penelope's heart, which she seems to have kept well in hand till the Earl of Devonshire secured it. No doubt she was a dangerous friend for Sidney, but there is a strain in all he wrote of her which forbids us to accept its protests as entirely genuine.

As the poems called *Astrophel and Stella* were written after their heroine's marriage, there is much reason to suppose that they were composed on system, and in imitation of the Italian sonneteers, who arranged such sequences with a forethought and precision hardly characteristic of ardent love, which finds expression in spontaneous lyric but not in laboured line and computed quantity.

So many poems were devoted to the time before Stella's marriage, when Astrophel had learned to love her, but these show signs of being written after that event. So many portray the slow changes in his mood which led him to the full tide of his passion; so many celebrate rebuff and melancholy; and so many rise into the higher strain, which bids vain fancy pale



Penshurst
Guild House in Lych Gate



before Eternal Love; and the whole series ends with the summing up: "I speak a long farewell to these brilliant trifles."

But if we cannot discover the note of true love in these poems, we do find Philip Sidney's finest literary work. The sonnet which begins: "With how sad steps, O moone, thou clim'st the skies;" that on sleep, the protest "Because I breathe not love to every one;" and the noble "Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,"—are but a few of many gems in this rehearsal of "Poore Petrarch's long deceased woes, with new-borne sighes."

It is interesting to discover signs of Shakspeare's reverent reading of these sonnets. We know that the *Arcadia* supplied him with an episode for *King Lear*, and that seeds from its blossoms germinated in *The Tempest* and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Perhaps, too, the *Lady of the May* contained in Rombus a prototype of Holofernes in *Love's Labours Lost*, and *Astrophel and Stella* influenced thoughts and phrases both in his plays and sonnets, which but for lack of space we might compare. But criticism must give place to biography in these pages, and we can only point to its guidance as a sign-post to

those of our readers who may care to find out for themselves the charmed streams and pastures, the ordered mazes of poetic lore, the straight paths of hard achievement, down which Sidney's writings invite their leisure.

It was also in 1581 that he wrote his *Apologie for Poetrie*, published first in 1595, nine years after his death. It has known many reprints since that time, some twenty-seven in all. Its title was changed to *Defence of Poesie* at the second publication in 1598, and with the exception of Mr Arber's reprint in 1869 of the first edition, the treatise has retained that name, perhaps preferable on account of the deterioration of the word "Apologie."

This work was the outcome of Sidney's occupation with the whole question of poetry as raised by Stephen Gosson. It is a masterly defence, and a model of direct argument vigorously expressed, and, as Professor Morley reminded us, it has "higher interest as the first important piece of literary criticism in our literature."

He was probably engaged on this treatise in September, when the news of Hubert Languet's death at Antwerp reached him, and even at this distance of time we may grieve that he could not have been with his wise and

loving old friend to gladden his last hours and to close his eyelids.

Later in the year, some ornamental office was added to those which he already filled, and from other sources his income was slightly augmented. When Anjou paid his final visit in the winter, Philip was one of the courtiers despatched with him to Antwerp, where the Prince made his last histrionic wriggle for Elizabeth's benefit. Here Sidney would visit Languet's grave, and review with a rather sense of age the ten years of his life which had been endowed with such a friendship.

On his return in March 1582, he was occupied for a time with his father's affairs. The Queen wished Sir Henry to return to Ireland, but he made conditions which she disliked, and one of these was that Philip should accompany him and remain with him. This was not to her mind, and she dropped the proposal. Sir Henry Sidney went again to Ludlow, where Philip spent part of the summer; and in the latter part of the year, some fit of weariness or illness having disqualified him for Court, he went to Wilton to find rest and recovery.

He was back at Court by New Year's Day, and on the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation he acted as proxy for his Calvinist friend, Prince John Casimir, who was installed as Knight of the Garter, and was himself made Knight to enable him to serve. Now that he was Sir Philip Sidney, he wore his shield with a difference, and, chastened by the blows of time, adopted for his motto, *Vix ea nostra voco*.

Shortly after this ceremony, he was allowed to join the Earl of Warwick in the Ordnance Office, but for two years his appointment was left unconfirmed by letters-patent. He probably helped his uncle without drawing a salary for that time, an ingenuity quite worthy of Elizabeth. But he had shown a will of his own in absenting himself from Court the year before, so the Queen paid him honour enough to keep him there; and we find him enrolled in the spring of 1583 as General of the Horse, to which office, perhaps, some emolument belonged.

During this spring he had an important personal matter on hand. He had kept up the friendship with the Walsinghams which their hospitality to him in Paris had initiated. Frances, then a little girl, was now a fair and

gentle damsel, for whom Philip had a growing affection. He was the subject of many a maiden's dream, the object of many a sprightly glance and smile; but amongst those who "did him woo," he knew Frances Walsingham best, and their friendship ripened into "joyful love and great liking." She had but small dowry—a fact which not only acquits her suitor of all unworthy motive, but points to a real attachment upon his part. And if he did not celebrate her, as he had done Penelope Rich, we must not forget that he himself had marked the silence of true love:—

"Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do lovers prove ;
They love indeed who quake to say they love."

An obstacle, which touches the situation with humour, arose in Elizabeth's downright ill-temper at the engagement. She had done all she thought necessary to keep him about herself, and he must needs kick over the traces and get married. She sulked for several months and delayed the wedding, but had to "pass over the offence" eventually.

Philip was married in September, and lived quietly for

the next two years at Walsingham House, or at Penshurst, Ludlow, or Wilton, when the young people had respite from Court. His little daughter was born in 1585, and Elizabeth was present as godmother and name-mother at her christening. The two intervening years were occupied with domestic life and various business. He was practically a Master of the Ordnance, and in frequent attendance on his uncle. The Queen required his constant presence, and he maintained an almost unique position in the European society of science and letters. Books published in Germany and in Italy were dedicated to him, and amongst these two by Giordano Bruno may be mentioned. One, a poetic work called *Degli Heroici Furori*, was inscribed to him, that "heroic things may be directed to a heroic and generous soul."

In 1583 Bruno was in England, and early in the following year made one of a little company of thinkers whom Greville assembled in his house to discuss the profounder speculations of science, and at these gatherings Sidney was present.

But in spite of many interests he was wearied of inaction, and longed for some crisis which should force the

hand of England and employ its energies. When it came, it proved hardly worthy of the sacrifice which his country was required to make.

The occupation of American territory was still one of his favourite schemes, and the Queen, half in jest, had granted him letters-patent for the seizure of three million acres, to have and to hold, in the New World. Philip served in the Parliament of 1584, and helped to confirm Raleigh in the government of Virginia, as well as to equip Grenville's expedition, but he was too much engaged at home to make good his own claim to a settlement.

On the 12th of July William of Orange was murdered, a month after the death of the Duke of Anjou. The Queen chose to send a somewhat superfluous condolence to the King of France on the latter event, and Sir Philip was made her ambassador. He was bidden add to the empty courtesy a reminder that Spain was outgrowing France, and that it behoved the latter to send help to the Netherlands against Philip II. King Henry evaded the message, and Sidney returned more than ever convinced that England only could check the despot. He entreated Elizabeth to make a bold attack upon Spain, and not to

waste soldiers on the side issue of the Netherlands, which he believed would be better met by diverting the Spanish forces to the defence of the Spanish coasts and colonies. In this opinion Sir Philip Sidney was supported by every experienced admiral of his time, but it was impossible to make any impression upon the temporising sovereign.

Next year he was full of business, parliamentary and private. Much of the former was connected with internal politics, which meant the suppression of Jesuit plots. Perhaps the private business was his scheme for escaping from Court trammels to the New World. He secured co-operation from some thirty gentlemen, including his friend Greville, each of whom gave £100 towards the outfit of a powerful fleet. He gave all the money which he himself could spare, and Sir Francis Drake took nominal command of the fleet, with the understanding that Philip was to have equal authority after they started. Twenty-five ships were equipped, manned, and officered with the money which Sidney had collected, and the proceedings were in full development when deputies from the Netherlands arrived at Greenwich after a fruitless appeal to Henry III. of France.

They received an audience from Elizabeth on June 29th, 1585, and they tendered to her sovereignty in their country if she would help them to resist the tyranny of Spain. The Queen refused to accept so great a responsibility, but she offered to send them men and money, the cost to be refunded at the close of the war. After six weeks' consideration, a treaty was signed, in which the towns of Flushing and Brielle and the fortress of Rammekens were pledged for the debt.

Sidney was not in favour of the undertaking at this stage. He believed that a fleet which should harass and attack the Spanish West Indies would more effectually help Holland than any tinkering of its immediate condition. The treaty was little more than signed when Drake sent for Sidney and Greville. His fleet was ready to sail. The two friends, without leave-taking at Court, rode down to Plymouth. Their escapade alarmed Drake, who expected them to seek the Queen's permission. He delayed his sailing orders, and sent letters to Elizabeth with full information. Some unwillingness to share his command with Sidney may have influenced this betrayal, although probably the chief factor was dread of the royal

displeasure, which was sure to fall upon him as well as on the truant courtiers. Messengers came post haste from Court with letters of recall. The first were intercepted by a stratagem of Philip's, and were ignored; but the second messenger was a peer of the realm, and he reached the fleet, whose sailing Drake postponed from day to day. The Queen's commands were peremptory. Sidney must return, or abjure her presence for ever. She knew his character well enough to temper a threat, which he was capable of disregarding, with a promise of distinguished employment in the Netherlands. And this lets us into the secret of Philip's petulant behaviour. The Queen's partiality for the "jewel of her times" had barred one and another opening for his activity; and we learn from a letter written by Sir Francis Walsingham, that in the arrangements for the force to be despatched to the Netherlands his name was omitted from the list of those proposed for command. This must have galled him to the quick, and have inclined him to take service of his own contriving, and to burst the chains which bound him to a wearisome routine. But the Queen's express mandate could not be gainsaid, and Sidney

returned to Court, to be scolded no doubt, but at all events to be employed at last in a manner worthy of his character.

The fleet sailed without him and fulfilled its purpose. Drake so troubled the Spaniards that he drew upon England the concentrated wrath of Philip II. The Armada and its destruction, and the collapse of the Spanish power, were the outcome in God's providence of Sidney's fleet; and our country may still be grateful to the ardent young Protestant whose personal influence so decided the work of his generation.

Six weeks after his return, the Queen confirmed her promise, and Sir Philip Sidney was made only second to his uncle Leicester in command of the English army in Holland. He was governor of Flushing and of Rammekens, and left England to take possession on November 16th, 1585. The last home festivity which he attended was his baby's christening. There is a portrait of this little maiden at Penshurst. The gravity, gentleness, sincerity, purity, and grace which shone from out her father's spirit, illuminate the child's sweet face.

Lady Sidney could not go with him, but she joined

him four months later. William Temple was one of his small escort, and they reached Flushing three weeks before Leicester and the army crossed. There were stately receptions and costly entertainments as Leicester, and his petty court progressed to the Hague. Count Maurice of Nassau, William's son, took the lead in proffering this welcome, but he must have been sorely disappointed with the vain and extravagant commander whom Elizabeth had sent. Leicester wasted precious time in folly, and when the States asked him to accept the title of their Governor-General,—perhaps in hope that its responsibility would stimulate him to action,—he set aside his sovereign's instructions to assume it. This brought on a lengthy quarrel with Elizabeth, and nothing was done until he had eaten humble pie.

To Philip Sidney all this trifling was exasperating, for while Leicester was playing the fool, the Spaniards were confirming their encroachments. Sidney's special business at Flushing was to keep them from approaching by the Scheldt; and in spite of the unspeakable niggardliness with which his efforts were seconded, he

was able to protect the river. He wrote letter after letter to Leicester urging him to action, and even paid him a visit more than once. Letters to the Lord Treasurer at home and to Sir Francis Walsingham reiterated his entreaties; and these letters reveal his absolute faith that England's work in the Netherlands was God's work, and that in spite of danger, want, and disgrace, "it is no greater fault to have confidence in man's power than it is too hastily to despair of God's work."

In June 1586 the Spaniards won Grave, and Philip was nigh to the despair which he deprecated. It was in vain that he advised his uncle, who was mean enough to let Elizabeth blame the younger man's ardour and rebuke his demands, without offering a word in his defence.

Not till July did Philip find occasion for striking a blow. Count Maurice wished to capture Axel from the Spaniards as a make-weight for the loss of Grave, and he insisted that Sidney should lead the expedition. With a poor grace Leicester gave way, and on a dark night early in July, Philip and a thousand men embarked at Flushing, rowed up and across the Scheldt for twenty miles,

and joined Count Maurice at Terneusen. Only the two leaders knew the plan. Philip spoke to the little army words that "did so link their minds, that they did desire rather to die in that service than to live in the contrary." Three thousand men in all, the allies made a midnight march to Axel. Philip, with some forty men, swam the moat, climbed the wall, and opened the gate to the rest. Half the garrison perished in their unprepared resistance, but not a man of the allies was killed. The whole neighbourhood was secured and manned.

Leicester was proud enough over his nephew's feat, generously ceded to him by Maurice of Nassau. At home, the Queen had word of it, and Walsingham, and the Lady Mary Sidney, grievously sick, when the news came to hand. The good Sir Henry had died in May, and his wife made haste to follow him. By the middle of August, five or six weeks after the taking of Axel, Philip knew that both had passed away. His wife was with him, and they had a house, "very fair and an excellent air," at Bergen-op-Zoom. He was lord of Penshurst now, and a renowned general—but how his heart must have ached for the dear ones gone!

The Earl of Leicester left the Hague, and fixed his quarters at Arnhem, between the Rhine and the Yssel. Sidney in vain urged him to further undertakings. All his plans fell to the ground, partly because Leicester had neither courage nor good counsel, partly because the Queen stinted the most necessary supplies.

Towards the end of August, Philip attended a review of the troops at headquarters, and took heart of grace to admonish his uncle. Even Leicester must at last have become conscious of his waste of time and of Dutch money and patience, for he yielded to Philip's remonstrance and agreed to an immediate movement. About fifteen miles away from Arnhem, and on the Yssel, stood Doesburg, held by the Spaniards. Two days after the review the troops invested it, and three days later assaulted and captured the fortress. It was of small consequence except as a stage on the way to Zutphen, which was fifteen miles further north upon the Yssel. The smaller success strung Leicester up to attempt the greater. Garrisons were detached for Doesburg and Deventer, and Leicester reached the outskirts of Zutphen on September 13th. He divided the forces,

leaving his cavalry on an eminence about a mile from the town, and himself crossing the river with most of his infantry. Sir Philip was with the cavalry as a matter of course, and so were his two brothers and the Earl of Essex. About a week was spent in preparing for the assault, and at its close Leicester received information that a convoy with provisions was on its way to Zutphen, and would get into the town before daybreak. He was not told that reinforcements for the garrison were with the provisions, picked men, whom Parma had despatched to beguile the English on the townward bank of the Yssel into an ambuscade. The Spaniard's stratagem was successful. Leicester accepted the news without suspecting his informants, and he sent a messenger across the river to bid two of his captains intercept the convoy with two hundred horse and three hundred pikemen. We can understand that the younger cavaliers were sick of inaction, and welcomed any exploit, however secondary, which relieved the tedium of Leicester's procrastination. About fifty of these gentlemen, including the three Sidneys and Lord Essex, hastily did on their armour and flung themselves

on horseback as volunteers for the adventure. Sir William Pelham in his hurry rode up only half equipped, and Philip Sidney, with that scrupulous chivalry which pulsed in all his character, unbuckled his own leg armour and left it behind. They rode straight into the trap. Two thousand veterans of Parma's army surrounded the little company and attacked them three times in succession. But Englishmen know what to do in face of odds, and they clenched their teeth and hurled back onset after onset. Sidney's horse was killed, and he flung himself upon a restless and frightened animal which dashed through the enemy's line and bore him close to the Spanish entrenchments filled with musketeers. One of these fired at him, and the ball broke a bone in his leg and penetrated deep into his thigh. His horse, mad with terror, galloped off the field, and did not stop until it reached the camp. Sidney was borne across the Yssel to his uncle's tent. There he called for water, but a dying soldier just brought from the battle saw the vessel in his hand and his eye besought it eagerly. Philip handed it to him at once with the words: "Thy necessity is yet greater

than mine." Leicester was appalled at the appearance of his wounded nephew. "This my hurt," said Philip, "is the ordinance of God by the hap of war."

All was done that could be done for his wound and for his comfort, and he was placed in his uncle's barge and rowed along the Yssel to Arnhem. Those that laid him in the barge heard his voice in whispered prayer give thanks to God that He had granted him time to set his affairs in order before the end. He was taken to the house of a kindly Dutch lady, Madame Gruithuissens, who sent for surgeons and despatched a messenger to Lady Sidney. When she arrived, his wound had been examined, but not probed so thoroughly as he desired. The surgeons feared to give him pain, and hoped to cure him without extracting the ball.

News was sent at once to Elizabeth, who grieved truly over his hurt, and wrote him a letter of comfort and kindly concern. His wife nursed him with unrelenting tenderness, and when his uncle and brothers could leave the camp they visited him constantly. He was so calm and so cheerful that those around him began to hope, and the surgeons were sure of his recovery. But their confidence did not divert him from the most methodical

preparation, and it is evident that he never doubted death's approach. After the first week, when all had been done that was considered necessary, he made his will, providing for creditors and old servants, as well as for wife and child. His brother Robert was heir to Penshurst, and to Thomas he left lands worth a hundred pounds a-year. To his sister Mary he bequeathed, for keepsake, a diamond jewel, and to uncles and friends, jewels, books, and armour. No one was forgotten, not even the surgeons who attended him. A divine called George Gifford, who was living at Arnhem, and whom he had known in early years, was with him during the fifteen days after he made his will. From Gifford we learn all that happened. His fortitude never failed; he spoke cheerfully to all, and wrote letters to friends at a distance; he composed a poem, which was set to music and sung to him. He spent long hours in meditation and prayer, in converse with Gifford upon life and immortality. Every pursuit which had delighted him, every affection which bound him to the world, he sought to offer up to God. He bade those about him burn the pages of *Arcadia*. He prayed God that death might come to an unclouded mind. He seems to have

hoped at the end,—doubtless in that wonderful gleam before the darkness,—that another physician, his friend John Wier, might give him help, and he wrote three lines in Latin praying him to come; but the very morning after, the light began to fade, and some sadness and mistrust stole into his thoughts. Gifford comforted him back to joyful faith. He was passing away, but in full possession of his mind. His will was read to him, and he made a codicil to provide for his babe unborn, and to leave a sword to the Earl of Essex and one to Lord Willoughby. Then he bade farewell at intervals to one and another of the loved ones at his side—to his brothers near the end. “Love my memory,” he said to Sir Robert Sidney; “cherish my friends; govern your will and affections by the will and word of your Creator;” and at two o’clock he lifted both his hands to his breast, and joining them in prayer, he passed wholly into life eternal.

On Monday, October 17th, 1586, scarcely thirty-two years old, Philip Sidney “lay in everlasting bliss,—never fearing more to die.”

Protestant Europe mourned him “for all Christendom”; England, bereft, wept over her noble dead.

Four months later the stateliest procession which had ever filled the streets of London, swept up to St Paul's Cathedral to give his ashes burial. They and their tomb were destroyed when, eighty years later, the great fire raged in the city. But the light that was in Philip Sidney "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

“ O take fast hold ; let that light be thy guide
In this small course, which birth draws out to death,
And think how ill becommeth him to slide,
Who seeketh heaven and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world ; thy uttermost I see :
Eternall Love, maintaine thy life in me.”



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